

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of July 26, 2016

- I. **ROLL CALL.** Chair K. David Maxwell, Selectmen Lynn Doney, Nathan Freeman, Matthew Gadbois, and Kenneth W. Goslant. Also present were Town Manager Jeffrey Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Leslie Striebe (GO Northfield), Sally Davidson (Recreation Committee), Lisa Burr (The Woods Lodge), Michele Braun, Steve Davis, Gary Davis, Jeffrey Ott, Elroy Hill, Courtney Tabor (Tabor Earth Extractors), and Jerry Tabor (Tabor Earth Extractors).

Chair Maxwell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** The Board members and the public were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

- III. **SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** There were no changes to the posted agenda.

IV. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED)**

- a. **Leslie Striebe: Permission to Paint Wall Mural on Municipal Property.** Ms. Striebe would like the Select Board's permission for a student-painted mural on the Northfield Main Street retaining wall across from Videos & More. This would be a two (2) week school project and, once completed, would be similar in appearance to the Randolph wall mural located at the intersection of Vermont Routes 12 and 66. The Randolph mural includes depictions of the downtown area and other local landmarks and the proposed Northfield mural would feature our community's highlights. The cost would be about \$1000 for materials (paint, etc.) and Ms. Striebe will lead the fundraising effort herself. Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to grant permission for the student mural at the location indicated above. Selectman Doney asked when the painting would begin. Ms. Striebe said that it will be sometime after the school year begins and after the design has been agreed upon, etc. Selectman Doney asked who will maintain the mural. Ms. Striebe said that the students probably would do this themselves. There is some political graffiti on the wall now but this does not appear to be a major vandalism site. Selectman Gadbois is very enthusiastic about the project and pledged \$100 to start the fundraising effort. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Steve Davis: Informational Survey re: Union Brook Road Paving.** Steve Davis circulated a sign-up sheet over the weekend to collect signatures from Northfield residents who live on or drive regularly on Union Brook Road. Although it has the form of a petition, Steve Davis spoke to Town Clerk Kim Pedley about his intention last week and was informed that since there is no request on the form for any binding action (i.e., a Special Town Meeting, etc.), it really does not meet the legal definition of a petition but is more of a survey. The header on the top of each page is as follows:

Tell the Northfield Selectboard to Repave Union Brook Road

Dear Northfield Selectboard:

It has been at least 6 years since the Town has repaved Union Brook Road in its entirety or even part of it. In that time, countless pot holes and frost heaves have appeared on the road. The Town has fixed some, but not all. Even with these patch-jobs, the road is unsafe for travel, and is wearing down town members' vehicles.

We, the undersigned, are petitioning the Northfield Selectboard to prioritize the town budget to repave Union Brook Road in its entirety.

Steve Davis said that he was able to collect 144 signatures over the weekend and he believes that most of them are registered voters. He added that he was told that the road is so bumpy that some residents make detours to avoid the worst sections in order to avoid becoming physically ill. He then submitted the document to the Select Board.

Selectman Doney asked if Manager Schulz and Highway Foreman Trent Tucker have identified the worst parts of the road and formulated plans to address the problem. Manager Schulz said that originally he and Mr. Tucker solicited bids to repave Union Brook Road in its entirety but the bid amounts were much higher than what is in the current fiscal year's paving budget. They then went back to the paver (Pike Industries) for a quote on doing a temporary fix (i.e., "shim") on the worst parts of the road. Pike Industries provided a quote of \$99,000 for 7000 feet of Union Brook Road, which is about one-third of the road. Manager Schulz said that this can go forward if the Select Board will authorize the spending.

Selectman Freeman asked how long the shim coat would last. Manager Schulz said that since the road has a poor subbase and bad drainage, five (5) to six (6) years would be the maximum. Selectman Freeman agrees that a quick fix is needed now but he also would like a long-term plan developed that would address these drainage issues, etc.

Steve Davis said that when William Lyon served as Highway Superintendent, it was his policy to pave a one mile section of Union Brook Road every year. A proper base would be installed each time. After years of neglect, it was now a matter of driver safety so he would not object to a temporary fix so long as the road was smooth and kept maintained. He added that some residents have suggested tearing up and graveling the road, which would be a great improvement outside of Mud Season. Steve Davis said that since he is not a road engineer, he does not know the best way to get the work done but he felt strongly that something had to be done soon.

Selectman Goslant is worried that every Northfield resident who lives on a bumpy road will now want his/her road addressed right away. He and Selectman Gadbois serve on the Highway Committee and they are aware that quite a few Northfield roads are in bad condition. This was not due to a lack of oversight but instead lack of money. Although Selectman Goslant usually has opposed borrowing funds for road maintenance, there might not be any better options at this time.

Gary Davis noted that the Highway crew has patched about ten (10) bad areas on Union Brook Road this year but this has not helped much. The road remains in very bad condition.

Chair Maxwell thanked Steve Davis for his work in bringing the urgency of this matter to the Select Board's attention. This matter will be discussed again later in the evening (see below).

- c. **Michele Braun: Water Street River Park Project Update.** Ms. Braun is the former Zoning Administrator for Northfield and she is still employed part-time by the municipality to work on FEMA-related projects that commenced during her tenure. She has held meetings with about twenty (20) residents who live on or near Water Street where the proposed park would be sited on the FEMA buyout properties along the Dog River. She received feedback on what they wanted and did not want. At a previous meeting, the Select Board tasked her to have a design plan created and this was displayed last week (07/19/16) at the "Night on the Green," when additional public comment was sought for this and other potential community development projects. Ms. Braun said the municipality received a \$3000 grant to fund such outreach efforts including the design plans. When the outreach phase has been completed, she will prepare a report that will document the various opinions received. The project engineers now are working on riverbank restoration plans, which are due by Labor Day (09/05/16). The current plan is for representatives from the Town and the Friends of the Winooski to provide walking tours of the project site over the holiday weekend.

Chair Maxwell asked Ms. Braun for additional information regarding the feedback she has received. Ms. Braun said that those living closest to the site were very concerned about how the park might impact them in terms of additional parking, nighttime noise, etc. Those living further away were more interested in creating a facility that could be enjoyed by the whole community. However, there was general consensus that the park area should be kept as natural as possible with walking trails, etc. as opposed to organized sports facilities (i.e., volleyball courts, etc.). Ms. Braun has spoken to the engineers about the possibility of installing noise buffers, such as hedges, in consideration of the neighbors' privacy.

Chair Maxwell asked how the project would be funded. Ms. Braun said that there is a \$295,000 implementation grant already in hand. These funds need to be expended by June 2017 even though exact costs have not been determined at this stage of the project. In addition, the Friends of the Winooski are able to apply for additional ecological restoration grants on Northfield's behalf. Ms. Braun also has the impression that the State of Vermont considers this to be a model project that could be later replicated in other Vermont communities with riverside development. The initial cost estimate for riverbank restoration was \$450,000 but this was based upon some factors that have been eliminated so the ultimate cost might be lower. The aforementioned implementation grant does have a ten percent (10%) local match but this can be met with in-kind services, etc. The Northfield High School Class of 1957 also has been raising funds for the park project and this effort is very helpful since these private donations can be used to apply for public matching grant funds.

Chair Maxwell wanted to know when firmer plans might be available for Select Board review. Ms. Braun said that the engineers are finalizing their plans now and soon will be working on the bid process for the next phase. Manager Schulz felt that since there is a local municipal financial commitment, the Select Board should see the plans before bids are solicited. Ms. Braun noted that it is possible to divide the project into phases in order to make sure the on-hand grant money is spent on time and that additional grant applications can be made later.

Selectman Freeman believes that this is really a flood mitigation project with a park attached. He also felt that there is some vagueness on how much of the funds raised actually would be spent on public recreation. He wanted to know if there was a project budget available for review. Ms. Braun said that a final budget could not be generated until the floodplain restoration costs are determined. This should be done within the next couple months. The initial estimate was that the flood mitigation component of the project would comprise two-thirds of the total project cost. The remaining funds would be used for the recreational component. The project designs have changed over time so this might not be accurate allocation at this time. Ms. Braun added that since the bulk of public feedback expressed a desire for the site to be kept natural, it is likely that recreational costs will be scalable.

Selectman Freeman asked if there were any notes or other written documentation associated with these public outreach meetings. Ms. Braun said that there were and this would be included in her final report to the Select Board. Selectman Freeman said that he has been frustrated by the lack of information that has been publicly disseminated. Those Northfield residents who already have donated funds or plan to do so would like to know what is going on. Chair Maxwell would like Selectman Freeman to work with Manager Schulz to improve public communication regarding this project. He does not want any misunderstandings to keep it from going forward. Selectman Freeman also feels that since the Fairground Road area was hit hard by Irene flooding as well, it should be incorporated in any future flood mitigation/riverbank restoration planning grant applications.

Selectman Doney believes that Ms. Braun has done an excellent job on this project and should be highly commended. He also would like the project to go forward as soon as possible. Ms. Braun said that due to the numerous government agencies (both state and federal) involved in this project, there has been slow progress at times but this has been unavoidable. Ms. Braun has created a website (waterstreetriverpark.zohosites.com) in order to better explain the process to the public. The information on the website will be updated as this project proceeds and she will be the contact person for any questions. There will be links to this website on Northfield's Facebook page and the municipal website. Ms. Braun added that she has worked hardest on the floodplain restoration phase of the project since that must be done first in order to determine the final contours of the park site.

Sally Davidson serves on the Recreation Committee and she wanted to know why volleyball courts and other sport venues were eliminated from the project planning so quickly. Ms. Braun said that the installation of sport facilities were suggested only in passing early in the process but no one really came out in support for them. On the other hand, the Water Street neighbors were adamant in not wanting anything installed on site that would result in additional noise, parking, etc. Ms. Davidson felt that since the neighbors do not own the park site property, there should be more consideration of the concerns of the wider community. Chair Maxwell then thanked Ms. Braun for her hard work and he looks forward to her next report.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **July 12, 2016 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0, with Selectman Doney abstaining.**

VI. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Warrant #03-17.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve Warrant #03-17 in the amount of \$303,320.91. Selectman Gadbois asked about a \$7000 payment to the Vermont League of Cities & Towns (VLCT). Manager Schulz said that was the annual dues payment and is based upon population. Selectman Gadbois then asked about some SymQuest payments. Manager Schulz said that this covered the installation of the new network server. Since that project is ongoing, there will be additional invoices. Selectman Goslant wanted it noted that of the total warrant amount, about half (\$142,400) was spent on purchasing power for the Northfield Electric Department (NED) that will later be resold to customers. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Biweekly Payroll through July 17, 2016.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$86,221.50. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VII. LIQUOR CONTROL COMMISSION

- a. **Outside Consumption Permit: The Woods Lodge.** Lisa Burr, who owns and operates The Woods Lodge with her husband Jonathan, was present to make this request in person. There are some events upcoming and she would like to have the ability to serve alcohol outside near their fire pit, etc. Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Freeman, to approve the outside consumption permit for The Woods Lodge that will be valid each day from 12:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. until November 15, 2016. Manager Schulz said that if these events were being catered, there would need to be a separate permit application for each one. However, since the Burrs will be providing the food and alcohol service themselves, a blanket permit can be approved. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VIII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Paving Projects.** Manager Schulz noted that the municipality solicited bids for the paving of Winch Hill Road, Union Brook Road, and Slate Avenue. Unfortunately, the bid amounts were far in excess of the funds now budgeted for road paving (\$85,000-\$95,000). After consulting with Highway Foreman Trent Tucker, Manager Schulz went back and received a \$99,000 quote from Pike Industries to shim pave one-third of Union Brook Road, focusing on the worst segments. This would not be a permanent fix but would address the worst spots for the time being. While this paving is being done, the Highway crew can install some culverts, etc. to address drainage issues. Manager Schulz added that it would cost about \$600,000 to replace the whole road, which would include grinding down to the base, etc. and would be the long-term solution.

Selectman Goslant agreed that the shim work now under consideration would be a short-term fix to address the safety concerns that Steve Davis brought up earlier tonight. He would like the Highway Committee to work with Manager Schulz and Mr. Tucker on finalizing an action plan. Selectman Goslant would like some input from the other Select Board members on how much they would authorize in short-term borrowing. With the interest rates low, this might be a good time to do this. Chair Maxwell would like the committee to develop a comprehensive plan that would address both short- and long-term needs. If a funding mechanism outside the current fiscal year budget is required, Chair Maxwell would like the committee to make that recommendation. Selectman Goslant said the Select Board does have the Road Surface Management System (RSMS) planning program but this got put off-schedule due to road problems related to Irene flooding, etc.

Selectman Gadbois noted that at the last meeting the Select Board decided to put the paving of Slate Avenue on hold until drainage issues were resolved. In addition, Winch Hill Road paving also was put on hold since Union Brook Road was seen as more of a priority due to its bad condition. He would like Union Brook Road paved this year even if borrowing is required. Selectman Freeman thanked the Highway Committee for the tough decisions made already and those still to come. He also felt that better public communication would let our residents know that the Select Board does know about all the trouble roads and is working to get something done. Chair Maxwell would like the committee's final recommendation before the next regular meeting (08/09/16).

- b. **Winter Sand & Crushed Gravel Bid Proposals.** Manager Schulz said bid proposals for winter sand and crushed gravel were solicited and the proposals were opened yesterday afternoon. He and Mr. Tucker discussed the crushed gravel bids and decided to recommend that the Select Board award the bid to Pike Industries. Their bid amounts were lower or competitive with those of Northeast Material Group and the Pike Industries pit is much closer. Manager Schulz and Mr. Tucker did not discuss the winter sand bids because of a perceived conflict of interest (i.e., Mr. Tucker is related to one of the bidders.) Selectman Gadbois felt that it might be more cost-effective in the long run to have the material delivered at a higher cost since this meant that the Highway crew would not be diverted from their regular duties while traveling to the pit. Manager Schulz said that there was a similar discussion about this last year. The previous Highway Foreman (Ray Hudson) and now Mr. Tucker believe that the Highway crew can fit trips to the pit into their work schedule without too much disruption. If the Select Board prefers, he can provide a cost analysis of delivery vs. pick up that includes fuel and manpower costs, etc. Selectman Doney would like the winter sand purchased and stockpiled during the summer months so that it is ready when needed. Since sand doesn't go bad, there's nothing wrong with a healthy stockpile. Selectman Gadbois repeated that the issue is delivery vs. pick up. Selectman Goslant noted that if the material is coming from Pike Industries, it will be crushed slate and not crushed gravel. He added that some municipalities hire independent contractors to deliver the material at a lower cost than the supplier and perhaps Manager Schulz should look into this. Selectman Freeman would defer to the Highway Committee and management on this matter. His main concern is that the winter sand and crushed gravel will be on hand when needed. Chair Maxwell asked that Manager Schulz research the matters brought up tonight and come back to the Select Board with additional information at the next regular meeting. The bids will be awarded at that time.
- c. **Approval of VTrans Grant Reimbursement Forms (Fairground Road Bridge).** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve and sign the VTrans Grant Reimbursement forms for the Fairground Road Bridge Replacement Project. Manager Schulz noted that FEMA paid ninety percent (90%) of the bridge replacement costs with the state and local municipality splitting the difference. This is the state reimbursing Northfield for its share of the cost.
Motion passed 5-0-0.

IX. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. **Central Street Stormwater Catch Basin.** Selectman Doney doesn't know what this structure is supposed to do. All he knows is that it is an eyesore and when he inspected it after a recent rainstorm, it appeared to have both standing water and trash inside. Manager Schulz said the structure is supposed to collect and filter stormwater before it goes into an out pipe and then into the river. This keeps it out of the storm drains and from reaching (with its equipment-damaging grit) the Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF). It should be cleaned out every five (5) years. Selectman Gadbois agrees that it looks very bad. Manager Schulz has reached out to VLCT to provide a risk assessment. If safety or other concerns are raised, various improvements will be installed. Chair Maxwell asked if the engineer will accept installing a metal grate if funding is found. Manager Schulz said that he was.
- b. **Crosswalk Painting.** Selectman Gadbois asked about the status of the crosswalk painting. Manager Schulz said that there was some delay as Mr. Tucker had to purchase additional stencils to get the job done. It was noted that the painting only lasts about three (3) months in some heavy traffic locations. It was suggested that Mr. Tucker should look into installing some inlaid plastic markings, which last much longer.
- c. **Common Water Fountain.** Selectman Gadbois asked if there has been any progress towards recirculating the water in the fountain. Manager Schulz said he has discussed this matter with Utility Superintendent Patrick DeMasi. They have looked into purchasing a recirculating pump but found that this would be very expensive (\$90,000). It might be possible to put the fountain on a timer so that it operates for limited hours. Since Selectman Gadbois has expertise in this field, Selectman Goslant suggested that he himself look into this matter further and prepare his own recommendation for the Select Board.
- d. **Spruce Tree on the Common.** Selectman Goslant noted that Tree Warden Russ Barrett has inspected the tree and has recommended that it be removed. The tree is not in good condition and has overgrown the Common. Sally Davidson noted that a resident has offered a replacement tree at no cost. Chair Maxwell would like a detailed plan on how to proceed with the spruce tree's removal and its replacement.
- e. **Plan to Remove Trees from Town Right of Way.** Chair Maxwell asked about the status of this project. Manager Schulz stated Mr. Tucker and Mr. Barrett have identified the trees to be removed on Winch Hill Road and contacted the adjacent property owners. If all goes well in this test area, the project will expand to other roads with overgrown foliage. Limlaw Pulpwood & Chipping has been informed that they can start the tree removal as soon as they are able to come to Northfield. Chair Maxwell asked if there was now a signed contract with Limlaw. Manager Schulz said that the contract was still in draft form and will be reviewed by the Town Attorney before it is signed. Chair Maxwell would like this contract signed and executed as soon as possible. He also would like to be contacted by email when a project starting date has been set.

X. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT. There were no questions regarding Manager Schulz's written report.

XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)

- a. **Sally Davidson, Recreation Committee.** Ms. Davidson provided an update on several topics that were discussed at last week's committee meeting (07/18/16). This included the installation of the horseshoe pits; park vandalism; the BBQ and group activity planned for Saturday, August 20, 2016; quotes for a new Memorial Park bathroom; and other items. She asked if there were municipal funds available to cover the \$4000 cost of installing the concrete slab on which the bathroom will sit. Manager Schulz will look into this. Ms. Davidson then asked if the directional signs pointing to the parks have been installed. Chair Maxwell himself has seen some signs for Memorial Park, etc. but they may have been pilfered since then.

XII. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to adjourn. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Town Manager's Office.

These minutes were approved at the regular Select Board meeting of August 9, 2016.